REVIEWER'S BOX

MAR. 11-WED. I.

The music featured on Your Reviewer's Box is guarenteed to make you feel gay, as our selections tonight are taken from Samuel Goldwyn's Technicoler production, "Hans Christian Anderson", starring Danny Kaye.

Although the extraordinarily versitile D. Kaye has been Featured, highlighted, and starred in top notch films his star has never shone more resplendently than in this pictdre. The Goldwyn screenplay does not intend to be a faithful biography of the famous ~~Dutch~~ Danish poet myth- aker, and story teller Instead, it is a free fantasy woven about his whimsical and wise philosophy-- a philosophy that did not preach, but was devoted to the essential goodness, humor, and deep understanding of ordinary human- beings.
Based an a story by Myles Connolly, the screenplay was written by Moss Hart, author of many Hollywood and Broadway successes. The ingratiating music and lyrics were fashioned by Frank Loesser, best known as the composer of the brilliant scores of "Guys and Dolls".

A picture ~~producer-~~ which the producer dreamed of making for sixteen years and which ~~he~~ finally cost more than four million dollars, "Hans Christian Anderson" centers about a village cobbler who also happens to be a great teller of tall tales in the little Danish town of Odense, over a hundredyears ago. These tales so enrapture the children that they will flock to listen to him rather than go to school. Whenever Hans feels another story coming on, he flies a kite as a signal to the children , who quickly gather around him. The school master is naturally horrified and complains to the City Council. A group headed by the Burgomaster warns Hans to stop his cobbling. But Hans can neither stop story spinning nor entertaining the children . The schoolmaster delivers an ultimatim --but to no avail, and Hans, to avoid banishment, leaves voluntarily for Copenhagen. But ill-fortune follows him there. He climbs up on the base of a huge equestrian statue to attract trade, and is immediately arrested for"disrespect to the Kings Statue". He is constantly dreaming. His head is full of fantasies, and while walking he comes upon a poor lad whose head is bare from other children teasing him-- and Hans now wrote

the Ugly Duckling . He realizes now that this is his true role. He is first and last a creator of fairy-tales. He decides to return to Odense and fulfill his mission. When he finally arrives home, everyinr in town turns out to listen to his stories-- even the school teacher. Thus the Hans Christian Anderson legend comes to life.

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We now have a flash from the screen world of a coming film--"Cain mutiny" The U.S.S. Caine has survived inspection by the Navy and finally is ready to set sails on the Holliwood seas. The novel which epicts a mutiny on an American ship during World War II, ranks with "Gone With the Wind" and "The Robe" among the best-selling books of modern times.

The film version has been the subject of controversy ever since the rights were purchased. There had been reports that the Navy had objected to the picture. The unstable captain of the Caine, Queeg, was depicted as an Annapolis man; it was reported that the Navy insisted he should be shown as a reservist.

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You will perhaps remember that on an earlier program this year, we reported on the progress of Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" as it toured Europe. Well, Now this great American folk opera is coming back to Broadway which is good news to a great many people -- particularly to Ira Gershwin, who wrote "Porgy and Bess" with his brother George in 1935.

From his home in Beverly Hills, Ira Greshwin has followed the colorful oddessy of the current "Porgy and Bess" company, which opened last Monday at the Ziegfield Theater in New York. The company has just concluded fabulously successful visits to berlin, Vienna, and London , where it played to packed houses and Packed superlatives, and presumably could have gone on playing indefinitely.

Mr. Gershwin said that he made only one contribution to the new production. Director Breen asked him to write a few more choruses to "It Ain't Necessarily So" which is sung by Cab Calloway in such a manner that the audience invariably want more. Mr. Gershwin promptly obliged with verses like these:

Way back in 5,000 B.C.
Old Adam and Eve had to flee
Sure they did dat deed in
De Garden of Eden
But why chastize you and me?

Equipped with such extra touches, the new "Porgy and Bess" opened last summer in Dallas.

"Porgy and Bess was first produced by the Theater Guild on Oct. 10,1935, with Todd Duncan and Ann Brown in the title roles. It ran 124 performances. In the next seven years, its songs worked their way into American popular folk-lore, and when the show was revived by Cheryl Crawford in 1942 it ran even longer and had a successful road tour. Recordings have increased its popularity even more widely in the past decade, and today its place as America's great folk opera is unquestioned.

Two Ande fairy tails

The Kings New Clothes

Ugly Ducklin

By way of introduction to our second review of a new Broadway show, we have found a recent article about the current French films which should through a little more light on the subject.

According to the article, the cyclical fluctuations in the quality of foriegn- language dramatic productions are a hard phenomenon to explain. Why should it have been, for instance, that the most power ful and interesting films that came from Europe in the decade following the first world war were made in Russia and Germany? Why was it that the major achievements in the film creation in Europe were made next by the French during the subsequent thirties? Why did the wells of inspira tion flow in Italy rather than in France after W.W.II? And why is it that the French now seem in the ascent again?

There are all sorts of complex explainations that might be proposed and pursued to account for these general fluctuations, including changes in national politics, the inevitable flow and ebb of culture and also factors in the commerce of dramatic productions.

Perhaps, therefore Sam and Bella Spewack's "My Three Angels" which is the reworking of a French Hit by Albert Husson may explain this situation.

Husson's original ,like the current adaptation, takes place in 1910 and deals with a middle-class French family who operate a general store in Cayanne, French Guiana, the notorious penal colony. An unscrupulous relative is about to deprive them of the store and is also ruining the marriage prospects of the daughter of the house.

Three worldly and kind-hearted convicts (the "angels" of the title) who are doing repair work for the store-keeper, decide to take matters into their own hands. They arrange for justice to triumph by ingeniously murdering the villain who is standing in the way of the family's happiness.

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dramatization ofa theme; a farce with no articulation of philosophy, no discussion of good vs. evil. ~~But~~ Spewack's biggest job in America was that of reconstruction. To quote him on the subject," We felt that the theme of the play was---should a murder be committed if the end justifies the means?" Comedy, to be valid, should have a serious underlying theme. Therefore this playwrite invented a trial scene in which the whole concept of justice is satirized. The convicts will not murder their man until he's had a trial They stage one in the family's living room and try the man that they're about to kill, in absentia.

The most difficult problem once the first version was finished, w as casting the play, especially the role of the chief angel. But with this problen finally solved in the person of Walter Slezak. The play is finally having its debut this evening. It will indeed be interesting to see if perhaps this play contains the answer to the question of why French drama is now on the ascendency.

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We turn our glance now to Broadway for a New- comer --- Wonderful Town , starring Rosalind Russell .

To judge by the hullaballoo, everyone agrees that"Wonderful Town" is the best new musical of he season. Derived from "My Sister Eileen" this is the humorous antic in which R. Russell gives an ingenious performance. Although she has devoted most of the last twenty years to acting in Holliwood. she now emerges on Broadway as a versitile clown who can shake the slapstick or point up a deadpan line with equal dexterity. Smart or low comedy, it does ot make much difference to her. For she is a trouper, like B. Lillie, m. Martin, and E. Merman

There is an old rule in the theater that most of us keep on forgetting; Everyone looks wonderful in a wonderful show. In the instance of Wonderful Town, the source of all the pleasures is the book that Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov have written out of the materials of their 1940 comedy, "My Sister Eileen". Dramatized from Ruth McKenny's New Yorker character sketches ,that Haphazard comedy delighted theater-goers for a long time because of its natural blend of friendliness and satire. Like Miss McKenney, Mr Fields and Mr. Cholorov made the Greenwich Vilage of the thirties look cracked-brained without looking unsociable

In their musical version they have managed to get out of the mouldy basement apartment into some more decorative areas--a Village street, a Village backyard, to say nothing of a hospitable jail. Essentially, "Wonderful Town" is the story of two sisters fresh from Ohio who get caught in the whirlpool of Village life before they have a chance to get their feet on the ground.

Beyond that it is a dual character sketch of the hard-boiled sister who makes no impression on a hardboiled town and the innocent sister who has everyone paying court to her almost at once. The satire of Eileen and of the Village is affectionate. Even the charlatans and delinquents are likeable people. Serious studies of tolerance seldom contain as much of it as this fast and giddy merry-go round.

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